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Three bird species new to Venezuela and notes on the behaviour and distribution of other poorly known species

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Received 17 September 1998

The studies of Phelps & Phelps (1950, 1958, 1963), Schäfer & Phelps (1954), and Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps (1978) greatly advanced

knowledge of the distribution of birds in Venezuela. Publications sponsored by the Colección Ornitológica Phelps (e.g. Aveledo & Pérez 1994), and those of others (e.g. Lentino 1978, 1988; Lentino *et al.* 1984), also have contributed to making Venezuela's avifauna one of the best known in Latin America. In the last decade, access to remote areas, as well as an increased interest in nature tourism, has accelerated this base of knowledge.

Most of the information reported here was obtained between 1986 and 1997 during the course of field work by the author in Venezuela. Unreported records by others date to as early as 1969. Annotated information is presented for 40 species including 3 species new to the country, *Buteo jamaicensis*, *Chlorochrysa calliparaea*, and *Stigmaturota napensis*. The first two of these new species are supported by visual records by multiple observers, while the third is verified by tape recordings. Three others (*Dendrexetastes rufigula*; *Pseudocolopteryx sclateri*; *Notiochelidon flavipes*) were not reported in Venezuela by Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps (1978), but were mentioned by Ridgely & Tudor (1989, 1994) and are now known from specimens, tape recordings, or numerous sight records. The remaining records represent major range extensions or are species for which new information is presented on behaviour, including three species endemic to Venezuela (*Syndactyle guttulata*; *Premnoplex tatei*; *Cistothorus meridae*). An additional 10 less noteworthy range extensions are mentioned in a final paragraph. Tape-recordings will be deposited in the Cornell Library of Natural Sounds, Ithaca, New York.

Species accounts

HOOK-BILLED KITE *Chondrohierax uncinatus*

This species occurs almost throughout the country in both arid and wet regions, and locally ranges up to at least 2,200 m. Seasonal migratory movements are likely, but have not been reported. On 14 June 1996, between 0700 and 0730 h, near the Amerindian community of El Tigre (southeast of Pto. Ayacucho), Amazonas, a minimum of 14 (maximum of 20) birds were observed moving, in a series of short flights, through a partially forested area. Their overall restlessness and steady northward progress (all disappeared within about 30 min) suggested these birds were migrating. None was observed feeding. Two days later in a forested area about 12 km north of El Tigre, 2 female-plumaged birds were seen perched at about 0900 h, and at about 1015 h and several kilometers eastward, a flock of 6 circled low over humid forest as they moved steadily northward, disappearing from view within a few minutes. There is only a small number of records of this species from southern Amazonas, Venezuela (i.e. Cerro Uritani; Cerro Yapacana).

SHORT-TAILED HAWK *Buteo brachyurus*

There are only a few records in the Sierra de Perijá, Zulia, the Andes of Lara and Trujillo, the coastal Cordillera in Carabobo and Aragua,

the southern lowlands of Amazonas and Bolívar, and several offshore islands (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978). I report the following sight records: north of La Fria, Táchira (P. Alden); city of Mérida (1,500 m), and Universidad de los Andes (2,200 m), Mérida (P. Alden; K. Zimmer; S. Hilty; C. Parrish); Guanare, Portuguesa (P. Alden); San Fernando de Apure, Apure (P. Alden); southeast of Calabozo, El Sombrero, and near San Juan de los Morros, Guarico (P. Alden); Charallave, and Parque Nacional Guatopo, Miranda (P. Alden; C. Parrish; S. Hilty); Chichiriviche, Falcón (C. Parrish); Río Grande, Bolívar (S. Hilty); and km 133 (1,450 m) on the El Dorado-Santa Elena de Uairén highway, Bolívar (S. Hilty and D. Ascanio).

BLACK-AND-WHITE HAWK-EAGLE *Spizaetus ornatus*

Reported from the states of Aragua, Distrito Federal, Miranda, western Amazonas and southeastern Bolívar (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978), I note the following additional sites: 1 seen on 26 November 1982, 9 km northeast of La Fundación (1,200 m), Táchira (C. Parrish); 1 on 11 August 1983 above La Soledad (1,650 m), Barinas (C. Parrish); 1 on 5 May 1996 at Finca Vuelta Larga, near Guaraunos, Sucre (R. Ridgely and others); numerous records from Río Grande in northeastern Bolívar, the lowlands of southeastern Bolívar (El Dorado to km 134), dating from 1975 to the present (S. Hilty and others); and 1 seen 7 April 1985 at San Carlos de Río Negro, Amazonas (C. Parrish).

BLACK HAWK-EAGLE *Spizaetus tyrannus*

Reported from Mérida, Sucre, Monagas and Delta Amacuro (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978), I note the following additional localities: Río Catatumbo, Zulia (P. Alden, M. Gochfeld, M. Kleinbaum); Río Zulia, Zulia (S. Hilty); Refugio Curari, Falcón (C. Parrish); west of Capadare, Falcón, and east of Sanare, Falcon (P. Alden); numerous records in Aragua (Parque Nacional Henry Pittier), Distrito Federal and Miranda from 1972 to the present; scattered localities throughout Bolívar (Sierra de Lema; Santa Elena de Uairén; lower Río Caura) and Amazonas (Junglaven; San Carlos de Río Negro) from 1983 to the present (many observers). These records suggest the Black Hawk-Eagle is relatively widespread in forested lowlands and foothills but there are no records for the eastern slope of the Andes.

RED-TAILED HAWK *Buteo jamaicensis*

One adult plumage bird with full rufous tail was observed for several minutes at relatively close range as it soared over the Universidad de Los Andes Forest Reserve (25 km W of Jaji, Mérida). This is the first record of this species in South America. The bird was seen at 2,100 m, at about 1030 h, on 6 February 1992 by S. Hilty, K. Zimmer and a party of 12 observers. It interacted briefly with a Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus*, the latter diving aggressively at it, once resulting in both birds rolling over, with legs and feet extended in a defensive posture before resuming their separate soaring flights. Nearctic-breeding Red-tailed Hawks winter south to Costa Rica and western

Panama (Ridgely & Gwynne 1989) and there are a few reports from central Panama (R. Ridgely pers. comm.) but there are no previous reports from the continent of South America.

RED-BELLIED MACAW *Ara manilata*

On 23 June 1996 a flock of 5 birds was seen about 25 km S of Pto. Ayacucho, Amazonas as they flew westward across the Río Orinoco from Venezuela into Vichada, Colombia. The species was previously reported in Venezuela only from the lower Caura Valley in Bolívar eastward to the Guianas, and in Colombia from Meta and western Guaviare (formerly Vaupés) southward. Red-bellied Macaws feed heavily on the seeds of *Mauritia* sp. palms, and also roost in these palms (Hilty & Brown 1986). These palms are numerous in the Pto. Ayacucho area, a factor that may account for the macaw's presence here, at least occasionally. On 10 March 1998 a total of 19 Red-bellied Macaws, mostly in groups of 3–5, were heard (tape-recorded) and seen flying east over swampy plantations about 15 km south of Tucupita, Delta Amacuro. These are the first records for the state of Delta Amacuro.

SCALY-NAPE PARROT *Amazona mercenaria*

A flock of c. 15 birds was observed and tape recorded 18 February 1996 at approximately 1,700–1,800 m in Parque Nacional Yacambú, Lara. This is the northernmost record for this Andean species, which has previously been collected north to the state of Mérida (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978) and observed in Parque Nacional Guaramacal, Trujillo (Boesman 1998).

SPOT-TAILED NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus maculicaudatus*

One female studied at length 5 January 1998 was perched about 1 m up in the edge of a thicket of *Thalia* sp. in a wetland adjacent to a raised roadway at Hato Cedral, western Apure. On 6 January 1998 a male was heard in a bushy pasture along the Río Caicara at Hato Cedral and was subsequently tape-recorded, and called in repeatedly for observation. These are the first records for Apure. On 10 March 1998 another was heard shortly after dark and tape recorded and seen about 20–25 km northeast of Tucupita, Delta, Amacuro, the first report for this state. In addition, R. S. Ridgely and others saw and tape-recorded several in pastures near El Palmar, Bolívar on 26–27 February 1988. The species is known from a single locality, Hato San Jose (c. 20 km W of La Paragua) in Bolívar (Smithsonian Institution Collection) and a sight record from Maripa in the lower Río Caura (R. Behrstock, pers. comm.). This species is infrequent and local in Venezuela.

LYRE-TAILED NIGHTJAR *Uropsalis lyra*

Single males seen 21 January 1993, 3 February 1994, and 18 January 1995 below Las Delicias (800 m), Táchira, are the first records for this state, and are from much lower elevation than the 2,500–3,000 m previously reported in Venezuela (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978). On two occasions a male appeared at dusk from beneath a bridge

and perched on a slender open branch 3–4 m up over a stream. It then sallied out to the air; on several occasions the sallies were relatively long and rambling, taking the bird 100–200 m up or down the stream. This species has recently been found at a few additional sites at slightly higher elevations in the state of Barinas (D. Ascanio and G. Rodriquez, pers. comm.). Another male (without long tail plumes) roosting on a bridge that is part of a hydropower tunnel exiting near Altamira, Barinas, was shown to D. Ascanio, S. Hilty and others on 15 February 1998 by two local boys. This record, at 1,000 m, and the others noted above suggest that this species may be more numerous at lower elevations than previously suspected.

LESSER SWALLOW-TAILED SWIFT *Panyptila cayennensis*

Recorded in only 3 locations in mountainous terrain in Aragua and Miranda (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978), this species is widespread in small numbers in the lowlands. I here report a minimum of 19 sight records, representing 14 different localities, as follows: Parque Nacional Guatopo, Miranda; San Silvestre, Barinas; 4 km S of Tucacas, Falcón; San Juan de Colon, Táchira (P. Alden); San Jose de Los Altos, Miranda; Cerro Tucusito, Anzoátegui; San Carlos de Río Negro, Amazonas (C. Parrish); Río Grande, Bolívar; El Dorado, Bolívar; 66 km south of El Dorado, Bolívar; 84 km south of El Dorado, Bolívar; Petrolea, Táchira; ca. 15 km southeast of Pto, Ayacucho, Amazonas; Finca Vuelta Larga near Guaraunos, Sucre (S. Hilty).

RACQUET-TAILED COQUETTE *Discosura longicauda*

Listed in Venezuela from only two localities in Amazonas by Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps (1978). I report 3 sightings of males from the Sierra de Lema (km 102), Bolívar, 17 February 1982 (C. Parrish); and 1 or more males (and females presumed this species) at the Río Grande Forestry Reserve, Sierra de Imataca, Bolívar on 20 February 1991, 13 February 1993, and 10 February 1995 (S. Hilty). A sighting is mentioned for Río Grande by Boesman (1998).

FIERY-BILLED AWLBILL *Avocettula recurvirostris*

A female seen at Río Grande in the Sierra de Imataca, Bolívar by R. S. Ridgely on 28 February 1988, is the only record of the species in Venezuela since the initial specimen taken prior to 1916 at Cerro Roraima (Phelps & Phelps 1958). This sighting extends the known range about 350 km northward in Bolívar.

SWORD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD *Ensifera ensifera*

Reported in Venezuela only in the Andes of Mérida (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978). I report the following sightings: 1 seen 19 January 1993, and another 3 February 1994 at 2,300 m near Zumbador, Táchira (S. Hilty with others), and 2 seen at 2,100 and 2,300 m respectively, in Parque Nacional Guaramacal, Trujillo, 20 and 21 February 1996 (S. Hilty, D. Ascanio, and others). As with many highland hummingbirds, this species undertakes seasonal elevational movements. During the early rainy season months of May to August it

occurs in the upper Santo Domingo Valley, Mérida, ascending to 3,000 m or more (i.e. at the Hotel Los Frailes), but descends to lower elevations during the driest months of January to March.

WHITE-BELLIED PICULET *Picumnus spilogaster*

One bird seen by Hilty and several others on 9 February 1994 at Hato Los Indios (06°54'N, 68°20'W), southeastern Apure, represents a small extension of the range of this species, infrequently reported away from the Río Meta and Río Orinoco. Single birds and pairs were observed on 23 and 24 August 1994, and 13 January 1997, and 10 March 1998 in the vicinity of Tucupita, Delta Amacuro. The song, lasting about 3 sec, is a thin, high trill of about 25–35 notes that descends slightly in pitch (a song pattern found in some *Picumnus*) and is unlike that of the smaller Black-dotted Piculet, *P. nigropunctatus*, which occurs with it in eastern Venezuela. The latter's song is 2–4 high, thin *seeet* notes, rather halting and well-separated, a song pattern also found in some species of *Picumnus*.

CINNAMON-THROATED WOODCREEPER *Dendrexetastes rufigula*

A species not reported in Venezuela by Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps (1978) but known from numerous sight records in the Río Grande Forestry Reserve, Bolívar, dating to the late 1970s (C. Parrish, S. Hilty, P. Alden, T. Parker, D. Finch, M. Van Biers, and others). Noted as occurring in Venezuela by Ridgely & Tudor (1994), there is a specimen (alcoholic) in the Colección Phelps (M. Lentino pers. comm.). Areas along the El Palmar road west of Río Grande, where the species was once seen regularly, are now deforested but the species doubtless occurs in areas remote from the road.

GUTTULATED FOLIAGE-GLEANER *Syndactyla guttulata*

Endemic to the coastal cordillera of northern Venezuela, this species differs somewhat from its southern ally, the Lineated Foliage-gleaner (*S. subalaris*), in its thicker and upturned lower mandible. Like others of the genus, Guttulated Foliage-gleaners forage in thick undergrowth where they often accompany other birds such as antwrens, warblers and Common Bush-Tanagers *Chlorospingus ophthalmicus* in small mixed species flocks. Their foraging behaviour, observed between 1993–98 in Parque Nacional Henry Pittier, has heretofore remained undescribed. They hop rather heavily in foliage and often hang or cling sideways to understory branches to inspect dead twigs and broken branch and twig ends, and regularly use their peculiar bill to pry off loose or flaking bark, or chip it off with a characteristic chiseling motion recalling that of *Simoxenops* and *Neotantes*. On 3 September 1994 the species was observed attending a large swarm of *Echiton* sp. army ants.

WHITE-THROATED BARBTAIL *Premnoplex tatei*

One individual seen by S. Hilty and P. Boesman (tape-recorded by Hilty) 27 August 1994, on the north slope of Cerro Negro (1,600 m) on the Sucre/Monagas border, represents the first verification of this species (ssp. *tatei*) away from the coastal Paria Mountains in almost 50

years (Collar *et al.* 1992). This bird remained mostly 0.2–3 m up in cluttered forest understory dominated by small palms and arums, and once hopped in the open along a large, bare log wedged horizontally about 2 m up in boulders and dense vegetation. Our attention was drawn to this individual by its series of rather low-pitched, whistled couplet or triplet notes which continued without interruption for several minutes. The bird was loosely associated with a pair of Grey-headed Warblers *Basileuterus griseiceps*, a species whose status and distribution has been discussed by Boesman & Curson (1995). We did not observe the barbtail hitching along and climbing up the lower part of tree trunks in the manner of allied Spotted Barbtail *Premnoplex brunnescens*. Instead we only noted it hopping in vegetation and on boulders and logs close to the ground. The vocalizations also appear to differ from the thin-trilled song of *P. brunnescens*.

RUFOUS-RUMPED ANTWREN *Terenura callinota*

Previously known from a single specimen from the Perijá Mts. (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978), I report records from both slopes of the Andes as follows: on the east slope, single males were seen 6 August and 8 August 1982 in forest canopy at 1,400 m on the La Soledad Tunnel Rd, 5.1 km southwest of La Soledad (08°48'N, 70°34'W), western Barinas (C. Parrish); a female seen in the same area 28 December 1982, and another (sex unrecorded) seen 13 October 1983 (C. Parrish); 4 female-plumaged birds were seen 23 April 1996, at the La Soledad tunnel area at 1,450 m (08°48'N, 70°34'W), northwest Barinas (R. Ridgely and others, *in litt.*). On the west slope of the Andes in Mérida, a male was tape-recorded singing, and seen 20 June 1993, and again 19 June 1994, in the canopy of cloud forest about 15 km east of La Azulita (1,850 m), Mérida (S. Hilty).

LESSER WAGTAIL-TYRANT *Stigmatura napersis*

Six individuals were observed and tape-recorded 23 June 1996 on a small (ca. 1.5 ha), flooded river island in the Río Orinoco about 25 km upriver (south) from Pto. Ayacucho, or about 15–20 min by boat above the Camturama Tourist Lodge (and see Boesman 1998). Up to 4 pairs were observed on this same island by Hilty and others on 3 January 1998. Vegetation on the island consisted of brushy early succession stage shrubs and young trees. These are the first records for this river island specialist anywhere in the Orinoco river drainage and they represent a range extension of nearly 1,000 km northward from nearest known sites on the Amazon River in Brazil and Colombia (Ridgely & Tudor 1994).

BEARDED TACHURI *Polystictus pectoralis*

An enigmatic species, known from a number of mostly grassland sites in Falcón, Barinas, Apure, Carabobo, Amazonas and Bolívar, but very infrequently reported anywhere in Venezuela during the last two decades. It's population appears to be in sharp decline. In light of the paucity of modern records I report 3 recent sightings as follows: 1 male seen at km 202 on 16 February 1995 (Hilty), 1 female at km 136

(Monumento del Soldado Pionero) on 12 January 1996 (S. Hilty, D. Ascanio, N. Currie and others), both along the El Dorado—Santa Elena de Uairén highway in eastern Bolívar, and 1 male found by F. Thompson on 3 January 1997 and subsequently seen by Hilty, D. Ascanio and others in a shrubby grassland about 15 km wsw of Santa Elena de Uairén, Bolívar (04°33'N, 61°11'W). All our observations were in relatively tall grass (0.8 m or higher) or grass and shrubs that had probably not been burned for at least a year. The burning of almost all grasslands during the dry season in Venezuela is believed to be a major factor causing the population decline of this species (Collar & Wedge 1995).

CRESTED DORADITO *Pseudocoloptyx sclateri*

Not reported by Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps (1978) but known from numerous sight records since at least the early 1980s (C. Parrish, A. Altman, M. L. Goodwin, M. Lentino, etc.), and from a number of unpublished specimens (Colección PROFAUNA, Maracay, Aragua), mostly from the Embalse de Tacarigua, Falcón (11°03'N, 68°25'W), and in or near the coastal northwestern end of Parque Nacional Henry Pittier, Aragua. I report observations of 9 individuals seen on 24 June 1994 at the Embalse de Tacarigua, eastern Falcón, including definite breeding evidence (pair of adults with recently fledged juvenile). All individuals were seen or flushed from extensive patches of *Polygonum* (2 individuals also in tall rushes) growing at the edge of the lagoon. Crested Doraditos typically remain hidden in vegetation at the edge of water and are easily overlooked.

RIVERSIDE TYRANT *Knipolegus orenocensis*

An uncommon flycatcher in Venezuela. A pair observed 23 June 1996 and 2 more on 3 January 1998, on the same flooded river island (ca. 25 km south of Pto. Ayacucho) as *Stigmatura napensis* (above), represent a small southward range extension. Previously known in Venezuela from several sites downriver on the Río Orinoco, the closest being Puerto Páez, about 100 km downriver from the present site (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps, 1978).

AMAZONIAN BLACK-TYRANT *Knipolegus poecilocercus*

Observations and tape recordings by Hilty of displaying males in January, February and March, 1992–98 at Hato Cedral, Apure, represent a small northward extension of the range of this species. Previously known in Venezuela from Amazonas and El Amparo on the Río Arauca in western Apure (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978). This species may prove to be more widespread in wetter parts of the llanos of central Venezuela. It has not been observed in the late May to October wet season at Hato Cedral and some seasonal migratory movement may occur.

WHITE-THROATED KINGBIRD *Tyrannus albogularis*

Known in Venezuela only from a few specimens taken near Santa Elena de Uairén, Bolívar in the extreme southeastern corner of the

country (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978). The species appears to be resident and breeding there as there are many records during the austral summer months of January and February (K. Zimmer, S. Hilty, D. Ascanio), a time when austral breeders are unlikely in Venezuela. A pair also was seen 18 February 1994, about 60 km S of Pto. Ayacucho, Amazonas by K. Zimmer; a second pair was seen at the Camturama Lodge, about 20 km S of Pto. Ayacucho, on 17 June 1996 (S. Hilty and others). A single individual carefully studied at El Palmar, Bolívar, 1 July 1994 (S. Hilty and P. Boesman) could have been an austral migrant. Near Santa Elena de Uairén the species occurs in the vicinity of scattered *Mauritia* palms in savannas, on fences in grassland with a few scattered low shrubs, and in low-lying areas along the borders of gallery forest. This species closely resembles the much commoner Tropical Kingbird *T. melancholicus* but has higher-pitched, more rapidly trilled calls.

PALE-FOOTED SWALLOW *Notiochelidon flavipes*

Although not reported from Venezuela by Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps (1978), this species' presence in Venezuela has been documented by Lentio (1988), Ridgely & Tudor (1989), and Ryan & Lentino (1995). In addition to the sites mentioned by these authors I add 2 other new localities to its range. A flock of *c.* 25 was seen at an unusually low elevation of 1,500 m, along the San Isidro Tunnel Rd. in northwestern Barinas on 29 January 1994 by D. Stejskal, C. Benesh, S. Hilty and others. The flock was studied carefully by all observers through a 50x Questar telescope. Most were perched on high bare branches in an emergent tree. About 20–25 were seen in Parque Nacional Guaramacal on 29 June 1995 (S. Hilty; M. L. Goodwin), and smaller numbers there on 21 February 1996 and 20 February 1997 (S. Hilty; D. Ascanio), all between 2,075–2,400 m (also see undated record in Boesman 1998). Pale-footed Swallows are typically seen in small flocks of 3–8, or occasionally more.

PARAMO WREN *Cistothorus meridae*

Reported only from the state of Trujillo and Mérida, Venezuela (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978; Ridgely & Tudor 1989), I have seen and tape-recorded this species on 20 January 1993, 1 February 1994, 15 January 1995, and 19 January 1996 at Páramo Batallón (08°05'N, 71°55'W), northern Táchira. This species was also seen and tape-recorded at this locality in 1995 by R. S. Ridgely and others.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER *Protonotaria citrea*

Known from specimens from the Maracaibo region, the coast (mainly mangroves), and offshore islands of Los Roques and La Orchilas (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978), there are no records more than a very short distance inland in Venezuela. I report the following inland records: a female seen in gallery forest 26 February 1996 at Hato El Frio (7°35'N, 68°50'W), Apure; a male 17 February 1998 along the Río Caicara at Hato Cedral (7°28'N, 69°18'W), Apure (this latter bird found independently a few days later by D. Fisher); a

male 23 January 1993 in the eastern foothills (c. 300 m) of the Sierra de San Luis, Falcón, and a female-plumaged bird in ranchland near Cerro Misión, Falcón, 8 February 1998. R. Behrstock and J. Kingery report a male seen near Caurama, lower Río Caura, Bolívar, 3 March 1993, and R. S. Ridgely and K. Zimmer saw one at Hato Piñero, Cojedes, February 1992.

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER *Dendroica castanea*

A bird in immature plumage was well studied on 12 January 1991, by Hilty and K. Zimmer and by several other observers as it foraged in large samán (*Pithecellobium* sp.) trees in the yard of the old hacienda at Hato Piñero, east of El Baul, Cojedes. This is the first record of this species for Cojedes (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978). In Venezuela it winters chiefly in foothill and lower montane elevations, but regularly in the lowlands of western Colombia and southern Middle America and a few records as far south as northern Ecuador (R. S. Ridgely pers. comm.).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER *Dendroica pensylvanica*

Known from 1 specimen (Colección Phelps) and 2 unpublished sight records, 10 March 1970, and 27 March 1976, both below 500 m on the north slope of Parque Nacional Henry Pittier, Aragua (P. Alden *in litt.*). I report four additional sightings of this species in nonbreeding plumage and one in partial breeding plumage, as follows: 1 seen 26 January 1994, another 24 January 1995, both in exactly the same area along a small stream about 12 km above Ocumare, Aragua (400 m); 1 seen 4 February and 23 March 1998 (probably same bird) at the Rancho Grande Biological Station (1,000 m), Aragua, and a bird in partial breeding plumage 25 March 1998 on a fork of the Turiamo Rd. (150 m), about 5 km E of Turiamo, Aragua by Hilty, K. Kaufman and others. It is noteworthy that the species has, so far, been reported only in the state of Aragua in Venezuela. The easternmost record in South America is 1 seen 19 November 1996 at Georgetown, Guyana by R. S. Ridgely and others (pers. comm.).

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER *Dendroica coronata*

A moulting male in partial adult plumage and showing a small but distinct patch of yellow on the throat was observed on 19 January 1988 at the Hotel Los Frailes (3,000 m), Mérida. Initially the bird was seen by B. Kautest, and later repeatedly by S. Hilty and others. This bird was believed to represent the western ssp. *auduboni*, a form not previously reported in South America. There is a single specimen (from Delta Amacuro) of the eastern ssp. *coronata* in Venezuela (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978).

CERULEAN WARBLER *Dendroica cerulea*

Two males were seen by R. S. Ridgely, T. Meyer and others on 2 March 1988 in the upper zone of the Sierra de Lema, about 1,450 m, in easternmost Bolívar (R. S. Ridgely, pers. comm.). This species has not

previously been reported away from the Andes or south of the northern cordilleras in Venezuela (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978).

GREY-THROATED WARBLER *Basileuterus cinereicollis*

Four individuals of this poorly known species were heard and two were seen 20 June 1994, approximately 10 km by road southeast of and above La Azulita, Mérida, at elevations between 1,475 and 1,510 m. Each of the four singing birds was in dense undergrowth on very steep slopes along an approximately 0.5–0.7 km section of road. Two birds I observed for short periods were retiring and kept mostly 1–5 m up and out of sight, even when singing. Taped playback produced responses ranging from birds remaining hidden to 1 individual that appeared in the open and sang repeatedly from perches 2–9 m up. The thin, weak song, a wispy, very high-pitched, *swée-swée—seet!* with slight variations but with last note usually higher-pitched, is insignificant and easily overlooked. Singing may be seasonal, perhaps stimulated by the onset of the rainy season, as I have visited this area many times during the drier months of January–March without hearing them.

WHITE-BELLIED DACNIS *Dacnis albiventris*

Previously known from only two localities (near Cerro Duida and El Carmen, Amazonas) in Venezuela (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978) and an unpublished sight record 13 May 1992 at the Junglaven Lodge, Amazonas (R. Behrstock, B. Finch), this species is rare and poorly known throughout its range (Ridgely & Tudor 1989). A flock of 9 was observed 15 June 1995 along forest edge between Pto. Ayacucho and the Amerindian community of El Gavilán, Amazonas by Hilty and several others. The flock consisted of 2 adult males (with golden eyes), at least 5 female-plumaged birds (dark eyes), and 1–2 subadult males which resembled females but showed blackish flight feathers. This group arrived and departed more or less together to feed on small berries of a Melastomataceae tree (*Miconia* sp.) about 8–10 m high, that was growing along a narrow road through tall lowland forest. The flock returned at least six times during a 2 h period, feeding for 5–8 min each time, but only when other tanagers, manakins and honeycreepers were present. When feeding in the melastome tree no vocalizations were heard, but upon departure, flying off 100 m or more and back up to the canopy, they gave soft, silky *seeeee* calls. The flock always returned to the high canopy, often to one or more legume trees (family Mimosoidae) where they foraged restlessly in the highest, outer foliage, inspecting the small leaflets of doubly-compound leaves, occasionally hanging upside down, and typically flying off some distance from the top of one high crown to another in little straggling groups of 3–6. Away from the fruiting tree these birds were observed only in monospecific groups.

On 16 November 1996 a group of 3 was seen foraging in the highest part of the crown and outer foliage of an emergent rainforest tree (at least 45–50 m) that supports a section of the rainforest canopy walkway at the ACEER Laboratory (Amazon Center for Environmental Education and Research), not far from the mouth of the Río Napo,

Loreto, Peru. As in Venezuela, these birds were very active and remained mostly in outer canopy foliage. They spent less than 1 min in the tree, during which time several other honeycreepers and tanagers were present, before flying off perhaps 200 m to the crown of another emergent tree. These observations suggest that this species occurs principally in the crowns of the highest emergent treetops in humid lowland forest, a factor that has probably contributed to the scarcity of records for this species.

ORANGE-HEADED TANAGER *Thlypopsis sordida*

At least 4 of these distinctive birds were observed 23 June 1996 on the same flooded Orinoco river island in Amazonas as *Stigmatura napensis* and *Knipolegus orenocensis* (above). This is the first published record for Amazonas. Two were also seen there 3 January 1998. Previously known in Venezuela only from the lower Río Orinoco in the states of Bolívar and Anzoátegui (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978) where it is confined mainly to early successional stage vegetation on river islands and river banks.

ORANGE-EARED TANAGER *Chlorochrysa calliparaea*

Previously unreported in Venezuela, a single male of this striking species was well studied by Hilty and others as it foraged with a mixed species flock along the San Isidro Tunnel Road (08°52'N, 70°35'W), extreme northeast Barinas on 9 January 1987. It was observed again in February 1987 by J. Pierson and others, and subsequently up to 3 individuals (male, female, and imm.) have been seen in various years since; 1 was seen as recently as 4 February 1997 by Hilty. Recorded on the eastern slope of Colombia's Andes north only to western Caquetá, the present record extends the known range more than 500 km northward (Hilty & Brown 1986). Significantly, in this area very few roads penetrate the narrow elevational band of cloud forest where this species occurs, and future work may reveal that the species has a more continuous distribution.

FINSCH'S EUPHONIA *Euphonia finschi*

A male and 3 female-plumaged birds were seen and tape-recorded at the edge of gallery forest on 28 February 1994 about 16 km north of Santa Elena de Uairén, southeastern Bolívar. A single male was seen, and again tape-recorded 18 February 1995 in the same locality, and a male and female were seen 1 March 1998. This pair was observed eating mistletoe berries in the canopy of a gallery forest tree. Previously known from only 1 specimen in Venezuela from near Cerro Roraima (Arabopo) to the north in Bolívar (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978). The species is relatively numerous eastward in the Guianas and appears to be resident, in small numbers, in the extreme southeastern portion of the Gran Sabana adjacent to Guyana.

OLEAGINEOUS HEMISPINGUS *Hemispingus frontalis*

I report simultaneous group singing in this widespread but inconspicuous forest understory bird of the Andes and coastal

cordilleras of Venezuela. Shortly after dawn on 22 January 1995 I observed 4 birds foraging alone through the understory of wet montane forest at 1,800 m and about 300 m north of the junction of the El Limón Road with the main road to Colonia Tovar, Aragua. About once every 30 sec the 4 simultaneously burst into a very rapid, chattering quartet consisting of a fast stream of chippy notes, the performance lasting about 5 sec. When one bird (the same each time?) started singing the others joined almost instantaneously with identical songs which sounded slightly out of synchrony, producing a vibrating chorus. Thereafter all 4 resumed foraging, frequently hanging downward to inspect suspended and curled dead leaves or piles of accumulated dead leaves and debris in thickets. The birds stayed relatively close together as they foraged and sang *c.* 25 times over a span of 12 min of observation. Simultaneous singing by groups of birds has been reported in at least 4 other species of *Hemispingus*. Furthermore, 2 other species of *Hemispingus* regularly sing duets (Isler and Isler 1987). Simultaneous singing also is known to occur in a few other Neotropical species, e.g. groups of 3 Rufous Cacholotes *Pseudoseisura cristata* in Brazil (K. Zimmer pers. obs.), groups of 3 Plain Softtails *Thripophaga fusciceps* in Peru, and groups of 4 or more Black-fronted *Monasa nigrifrons* and White-fronted Nunbirds *M. morphoeus* in Peru (Hilty).

SWALLOW Tanager *Tersina viridis*

This species breeds locally in the northern Andes and across Venezuela's coastal mountains from Yaracuy to Sucre from about February to June or July, then migrates away (Hilty, pers. obs.). Little is known of the length or duration of these migrations, or of the destination(s) of these birds, although single birds, pairs, or small groups have been recorded almost throughout the states of Amazonas and Bolívar during the period when they are absent from breeding areas in the northern part of the country. A large, presumably migratory (pre-migratory?) congregation of these birds seen on the north slope of Cerro Negro, on the Sucre/Monagas border is, therefore, of interest. At about 1600 h, on 26 August, P. Boesman and I observed a flock of more than 60 individuals perched on high dead branches of a large tree emergent over coffee. A few minutes later we observed a second flock, estimated to contain *c.* 125 birds, rise up and fly northward over the forest. Minutes later a third flock of *c.* 20 were also observed flying northward. Flocks of this size—apparently pre-migratory flocks—have not been reported in this species.

BLACK-STRIPED SPARROW *Arremonops conirostris*

One was seen and tape-recorded on 16 June 1996 as it sang from a brushy roadside ditch filled with water, a few km E of Samariapo (05°15'N, 67°48'W), Amazonas. The general habitat in this area is scrubby, white sandy soil forest and low bushy regrowth mixed with savanna. Previously reported from several localities in adjacent Bolívar (Caicara, 07°37'N, 66°10'W; Santa Rosalia 07°29'N, 65°39'W; Río Cuchivero *c.* 07°40'N, 65°57'W) by Phelps & Phelps (1963), this is the first Amazonas record and extends the range about 300 km southward.

SLATY FINCH *Haplospiza rustica*

I report the first records for Táchira, and present information on territory size and behaviour in this nomadic species that seeks erratically seeding patches of dying *Chusquea* bamboo for breeding. On 14 and 15 January 1995, at 2,350 m and just below Páramo Batallón, Táchira, I observed at least 12 male Slaty Finches stationed on small territories along a roadside through a large area of dying *Chusquea* bamboo with a very heavy seed crop. Each male was *c.* 50–75 m from its nearest neighbour. Songs were variable but usually complex series of phrases consisting of many buzzes, trills and short notes given by males perched in bamboo. Males also frequently performed flight songs which were similar but longer. Song activity remained very high throughout the morning. Four months later in early May 1995, when this site was visited by R. S. Ridgely, no Slaty Finches were present and the seed crop appeared exhausted (R. S. Ridgely pers. comm.). This species is infrequently encountered away from seeding bamboo and is probably dependent upon it for successful breeding. Such seedings of bamboo are rare or at least unpredictable in occurrence and large areas of intact habitat are required for a species to follow this breeding strategy successfully. Deforestation and forest fragmentation pose a threat for this and other species of bamboo seed followers.

Additional records

The following additional records represent range extensions (within a state, or new for the state), or unusual dates for migrants. All are by the author unless noted. An asterisk (*) indicates tape-recorded verification. Stripe-backed Bittern *Ixobrychus involucris* 23–24 March 1993, Hato Cedral, Apure, and 26 January 1995, Boca del Tocuyo, Falcón (no breeding evidence); Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis* 19–21 March 1994, Hato Cedral, Apure; 1 seen 6 March 1998 at a lagoon 10 km W of El Palmar, Bolívar, by M. Fritz, D. Ascanio, Hilty and others (no breeding evidence); *Barred Parakeet *Bolborhynchus lineola* 20 and 21 February 1996, Parque Nacional Guaramacal, Trujillo; *Pavonine Cuckoo *Dromococcyx pavoninus* 22 February 1982 (C. Parrish) and 24 February 1991, Sierra de Lema, Bolívar (1,000 m), and 3 February 1995, above La Azulita, Mérida (1,400 m); *Scaled Antpitta *Grallaria guatemalensis* 7 August 1994, Cerro Negro, Sucre/Monages border (1,550 m); White-naped Xenopsaris *Xenopsaris albinucha* 3 July 1993, 10 km SW El Palmar, Bolívar; *Rufous-crowned Tody-Tyrant *Poecilatriccus ruficeps*, pairs seen 21 February 1996 (and videotaped by Ellen Luce), 6 February 1997, and 11 February 1998, 2,100–2,300 m, Parque Nacional Guaramacal, Trujillo, and also reported here by Boesman (1998); 1 immature male American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla* 22 August 1992, Chuao (10°30'/67°32'), Aragua was an early migrant; 1 Blue-backed Conebill, *Conirostrum sitticolor*, seen 20 February 1996 (with D. Ascanio) at 2,300 m, and another seen 11 February 1998 at 2,600 m, Parque Nacional Guaramacal, Trujillo; Chestnut-vented Conebill *Conirostrum speciosum*

14–15 January 1994, Hato Cedral, Apure; and pair well-studied 10–15 km W of Tumeremo, in northeastern Bolívar, 6 March 1998 (Hilty, D. Ascanio and others).

Acknowledgements

I thank Peter Alden, Peter Boesman, Mary Lou Goodwin, Miguel Lentino R., Robert S. Ridgely, Christopher Parrish, Jan Pierson, Dave Stejskal and Kevin Zimmer for permission to cite unpublished records. I thank Ramón Aveledo H., and Miguel Lentino R. for permission to use the Colección Ornitológica Phelps in Caracas, Francisco Bisbal for permission to use the Colección PROFAUNA in Maracay, and David Willard (Chicago Field Museum), K. Parks (Carnegie) and P. Angel (Smithsonian) for sending computerized print-outs of Venezuelan specimens in their care. D. Ascanio was a valued co-worker in the field. I especially thank R. S. Ridgely for his careful review and comments on the manuscript. Peter Boesman, Miguel Lentino, Chris Parrish and Kevin Zimmer also read the manuscript. Beverly Hilty provided much support to me and our family, especially during my many absences afield.

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Important ornithological records from the Rio Juruá, western Amazonia, including twelve additions to the Brazilian avifauna

by *Andrew Whittaker & David C. Oren*

Received 1 October 1998

The Rio Juruá is one of the largest white-water tributaries of the Amazon. Its drainage is mostly within Brazilian territory, but the basin also includes a portion of southeastern Peru. There are only two important works on the avifauna of the Juruá. Nils Gyldenstolpe's (1945) major treatise deals with the bird specimens in the Stockholm museum collected by the Olalla brothers in 1936 (Olalla 1938) on the lower and middle sections of the river in Amazonas state, Brazil. Novaes' two reports (1957, 1958) are on his own expedition to the upper Juruá in Acre from June to September 1956. Here we report the results of new research on previously unexplored portions of the river basin (see Oren & Albuquerque (1990)), located between the relatively well-studied areas of central Brazilian Amazonia (e.g. Cohn-Haft *et al.* 1997, Stotz & Bierregaard 1989 and Willis 1977) and Peruvian Amazonia (e.g. Parker *et al.* 1994 and Terborgh *et al.* 1990).

Here we present an annotated list of the most important ornithological records from three field expeditions undertaken in the Juruá River basin, in the states of Amazonas and Acre, Brazil. The first was [part of a larger enterprise] to determine the importance of the Juruá as a biogeographical barrier. Quantitative data from other vertebrate inventories undertaken during this expedition between July 1991 and June 1992 at 12 forest sites have uncovered many noteworthy species records of mammals, reptiles and amphibians from along the Juruá (Peres 1993, Patton *et al.* 1994, C. Peres, C. Gascon, J. Malcolm, J. Patton and M. N. F. da Silva, unpublished data). The second series of expeditions was part of a research program to study the management of forest resources by rubber tappers in Brazil's first Extractivist